DARK STAR

THE TRAVELLER MICROZINE

ISSUE 2 -- JULY.

20p

TRAVELLER is GDW's trademark for it's science-fiction role-playing game; Traveller is used with permission.

Welcome to the 2nd issue of Dark Star, the news and reviews newsletter for Traveller players. My thanks to the people that bought issue 1, and an apology to the artists who went unmentioned in last issue -- Trevor Hammond, pages 1 and 2; Malcom Beaird, back page.

DARK STAR NEWS.....

Traveller figures:-

Steve Jackson Games, are to produce a range of 'Cardboard Travellers'. Similar to the range of 'Cardboard Heroes', the Travellers will be in 15mm scale.

Each 'figure' is printed (in full colour,) on heavy card, and folds to form it's own base. The front view of the Traveller is shown on one side; the rear on the reverse. The first of the proposed sets will contain adventurers; future sets will cover aliens, robots, and other SF goodies.

Closer to home, Games Workshop Ltd. are to produce a range of 'Approved for use with' Traveller figures. At present, 5 sets are planned: Adventurers; ship crews; aliens; military forces; and animals. Each set will contain 20 15mm figures (each sculpted by the now legendary Perry twins). Sets will be boxed, and will contain foam padding for easier storage.

Tabletop Games, of Nottingham are adding to their range of 15mm figures each week it seems. At present their range contains: Law Officers (read: Judge Dredd), including one officer mounted on a patrol bike (also dismounted versions), Adventurers, armed with an assortment of weapons ranging from clubs to laser rifles (and females); starship crews; and vacc-suited figures -- 3 versions, unarmed; with rifle; with pistol; Imperial troopers in combat/power armour; Mercenaries; and last but not least, redemptionist rebels (who would probably make good Zhodani troops).

Two new 'Approved for use with' sectors are in the making; Games Workshop Ltd have commisioned Bob McWilliams to produce The'Trojan Reaches', (located rimward of the Spinward Marches); and Andy Slack to produce'The Riftspan Reaches', (located rimward of the Trojan Reaches). Both sectors contain Aslan colonies.

And now, a competition. I have in my possession, two large maps of the Imperium. Each map measures 16" x 21½", and is black with political borders printed in red. It also marks out the sector boundaries, (the map shows 128 sectors); important powers are printed in white, these include: The Imperium; The Zhodani Consulate; The Vargr Extents; The Solomani Sphere; The Two Thousand Worlds; and the Hive Federation.

What you have to do to win a map, is to design a warship. The ship must be in the 500 ton range, and must be capable of Jump-3. Simple, isn't it. Ship plans are not necessary, but if possible a silhouette would be appreciated. All entries must be in by August 7th; entries will be judged by fighting capability, cost, and general effectiveness.

The Porcupine Class System Defence Boat By Simon Beaird.

Organised into flotillas of four, the 'Porcupine' has proved it's worth many times in system defence, anti-piracy, and 'guerilla' operations in asteriod belts. During the 4th frontier war, the 'Porcupines' were often carried by larger vessels for use as close escorts. One flotilla is based at every naval base (Imperial,) in the Glisten, Rhylanor, Mora, and Trin's Veil subsectors.

To date, the most successful flotilla, is the 303rd Gunboat Flotilla, based at Macene/Rhylanor (0202). The 303rd has destroyed no less than 15 pirate vessels since 1105 (this figure does not include captured vessels, which number 22 to date).

The 303rd flotilla comprises of: GB-117571 Fossa; GB-117583 Dhole; GB-117602 Ratel; and GB-117621 Nashista.

Each gunboat carries a 20 ton Gig/Lifeboat, and a 40 ton Scout Launch (used for courier duties insystem).

The Porcupine Class System Defence Boat, is continued overleaf.....

The 'Porcupine' cont'd...

GB-117571 Fossa GB-42069F2-900000-45000-0 MCr 503.55 400 tons.
Batteries Bearing 22 Crew = 14.
Batteries 22 TL = E (14).
Passengers = 0. Low Berths = 0. Cargo = 12. Fuel = 72. EP = 36. Agility = 5. Troops = 0.
SHIP DATA: 400 tons std. 12 crew. 6G acceleration. Power Plant 9. Computer Model/6 with fib/backup. Four turrets, fitted with: 2xsingle fusion gun; 2x triple beam laser. Armoured hull. Fuel for 56 days continued operation. Fuel scoops fitted; streamlined.
Crew - Command section: Command Pilot, Navigator, Chief Engineer, Medical Offiver.
Crew - Petty Officers: Chief Gunner, Scout Launch Pilot.
Crew - Ratings: 3 Engineers, 3 Gunners, Scout Launch 2nd Pilot, Gig Pilot.
Ships Vessels: 1 20 ton Gig/Lifeboat, 1 40 ton Scout Launch.

SB-117571 Scout Launch SB-0106B21-430000-30000-0 MCr 47.65. 40 tons.
1 1 Crew = 2. TL = E (14).
Passengers = 0. Low Berths = 0. Cargo = 3. Fuel = 4.4. EP = 4.4. Agility = 6.
SCOUT LAUNCH DATA: 40 tons std. 2 Crew. 6G acceleration. Power Plant B. Bridge fitted. Computer Model/2. One turret fitted with: 2x beam laser; 1 sandcaster. Armoured hull. Fuel for 28 days continued operation. Fuel scoops fitted; streamlined. Cargo space is usually occupied by J-torps, Recon Drones, or passive detector sattelites.

GG-117571-2 Gig GG-0104411-030000-00002-0 MCr 11.9 20 tons.
1 1 Crew = 1. TL = E (14).
Passengers = 3. Low Berths = 3 (double berths). Cargo = 4. Fuel = 1. EP = 0.8. Agility = 4.
GIG DATA: 20 tons. Acceleration 4G. Power Plant 4. No bridge. Computer Model/1.
One turret fitted: 1 missile rack; 1 sandcaster. Fuel for 35 days continued operation. Fuel svoops fitted. Streamlined. Cargo sp

DARK STAR REVIEWS.....

All reviews will have a guide to the quality of the product; the guide is in the form of two marks: the first number represnts the general quality of production, and the apparent amount of effort which has gone into the product; the second number represnts the usefulness of the product, ie. how much would you use it, and how useful it is. 1 = Poor/Little use; 2 = Average/Useful; 3 = Good/Very useful; 4 = Very good/Essential.

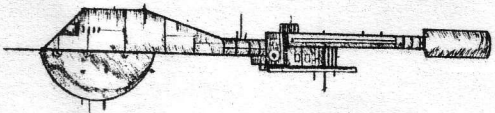
System Data Sheets. Paranoia Press. £1.75 for a pad of 50.
For the referee who prefers a detailed game, system data sheets will prove invaluable. Each sheet is double sided; the front contains all of the info necessary to record details of the main planet, including: UPP; trade classification; terrain types; gravity; temperature; and position in the star system, to name but a few. The reverse carries 3 geodesic hex maps for use in mapping noteable world surfaces.
Dark Star Rating (DSR): 3/3.

Planetary Data Sheets. Paranoia Press. £1.75 for a pad of 50.
Carries all of the information needed to map 1 planet (all of the stats which appear on the system data sheets, are on these), and a large geodesic map.
DSR : 2/3

Starship Log Entry. Paranoia Press. £1.25 for a pad of 50.
Everything needed to log the running of a ship, including departure times, ship expendables, no. of passengers etc. Captains should ask themselves - " Is this pad worth putting on my list of ship purchases?". Traveller book sized.
DSR : 2/2

Personal Data Sheets. Paranoia Press. £1.50 for a pad of 50.
Character sheets for Travellers (Not to be confused with Personal Data Files, soon to be printed by Games Workshop Ltd.), very detailed, back printed, and in 5 sections: Identification (Name, Race, Height, etc.); Education (Cpllege, Honors etc.), Service record; Military Occupational Specialities (Skills),; Service assignments; and Miscellaneous (psionics, Travellers member).
DSR : 4/3

Paranoia Press products are available in this country through Minifigs SKYTREX Ltd, 13 Gillingham st, London, S.W.13. Later this year, Games Workshop Ltd will be printing PP products under licence, and will distribute them throughout the UK.



F.A.S.A. (Don't ask me what it means!) Ship Plans.

First, a general description of the plans, and the presentation. Each of the four ships comes in a zip-lock bag, and is represented by a number of sheets depicting the ship in question, in 15mm scale (ideal for close combat actions!).

A cover/pamphlet is provided for each ship, and gives three scenarios for use with the ship. Except for the King Richard, scant details are given for each ship, and the few details available are located on the deck plans. The deck plans are drawn in black, on white paper (each sheet measures 11"x17",). An example of the actual drawing style is shown later on. This style of drawing can be very confusing at times, and I recommend shading in various ship areas, (try using different coloured pencils) so that little or no confusion occurs during a pitch-battle ("But how was I to know that I was firing through the wall!"). And now, on to the ships.....

I.S.P.M.V. Tethys. or Interstellar Para-Military Vessel - Tethys. £3.50.

The Tethys, is a 1000 ton mercenary transport, for use in planetary exploration, exploitation, or invasion.

DSR : 2/2

I.S.C.V. Leander. or Intersteller Commercial Vessel - Leander. £3.50.

The Leander, is a variable tonnage cargo ship; not unlike a large space barge, the Leander may become a 600ton Jump-6 ship, or if many cargo modules are fitted, a 4000 ton Jump-1 ship.

DSR : 3/2

I.S.P.M.V. Fenris. £4.95

The Fenris, a converted cargo ship, now packs a nasty punch; it carries eight Valkyrie fighters, each capable of 12G acceleration, and armed with triple beam lasers! The mother ship, the Fenris, is 3000 tons. More inside information is given for the Fenris, than for the Tethys, or Leander.

DSR : 3/2

I.S.C.V. King Richard. £6.50.

The King Richard, is a luxury (and I mean LUXURY!) liner which displaces 5000 tons! The size of this ship is enough to put off any pirate ship, even though the ship itself is unarmed. The King Richard was built for the Elite, Rich, and status seeking people of the galaxy. The charge for a normal stateroom is 50,000, yes, fifty thousand credits!

It is said that that the 2.2BCr (Billion Credits,) needed to buy the ship, were paid off in the first five years of operation. I think it adviseable that you have 1001 characters at hand if you even think of using the King Richard for an adventure.

DSR : 3/3

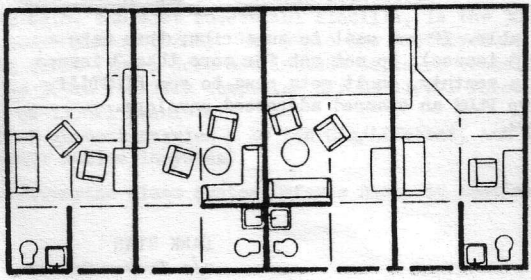
The F.A.S.A ship plans are available from Games Workshop Ltd., or from your local Traveller stockist.

The IISS Ship Files. Games Workshop Ltd. £1.95 Designer : Bob McWilliams.

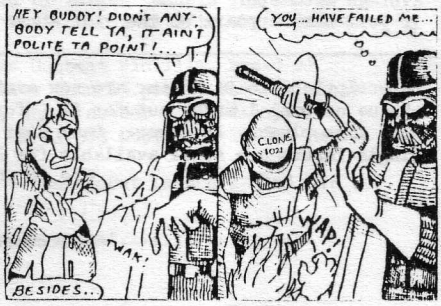
A Traveller sized booklet, containing six ship plans. These are presented in the form of microfilm slides, and come with build information , and specifications.

Included in the IISS Files are; The Heyan Rose, a freight tractor vessel; The Excalibur Class Express Packet Boat, a commercial Xboat; The Tiaflfiet Class Patrol Frigate, a Zhodani warship used to patrol the borders of the Consulate. (This ship looks like an elongated version of the 'Enterprise'.) Also included; An Imperial Interdiction Satellite; The Iylvir class Imperial Navy Light Assault Troop Carrier; and my favorite, The Hnneshant Type Vargr Tradeboat. It is rumoured that this is but the first of many ship plan booklets. In my opinion, a good book, but GW can now be accused of 'Filling in the odd blank space;'tactics, commonly used by Judges Guild.

DSR : 4/3 (Unbiased!)



SAMPLE STATEROOMS FROM F.A.S.A.

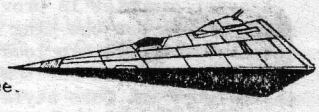


(c) J.D.W., and The Space Gamer. £1.35. Available from better games shops.

The Dark Star Contact Bureau.

This section of Dark Star is included for those players who have difficulty in finding other Travellers, or would like to fill out their complement of Traveller players.

Players are requested write down their DSCB code on a 3x5 file index card, or on paper if you do not have one; then send the card to me.



Block 1. Name and address (please use BLOCK capitals):
Block 2. The type of Traveller player that you are:
P = Player only; R = Referee only; B = Both player and referee.
Block 3. Your age (to the nearest year), no modesty please:
Block 4. The type of Traveller Campaign that you play in:
G = Official GDW campaign; V = Variant GDW campaign; M = Mixture of available products; or O = Original Campaign design.
Block 5. How long that you have been playing Traveller (to the nearest month), use 0 if you have been playing for less than 6 months:
Block 6. What type of contact you would like with other players:
L = Letter contact, exchange of ideas; M = Meetings for game sessions (with prior notice!); X = Don't contact me -- I'll contact you.
Block 7. (For research purposes only,) What zines or magazines that you buy which feature Traveller material.
A phone number may be given if desired, (if so, please state a time range to phone in).

For Example: Trevor Graver, 69 Lakeside Rd., London, W14 0DZ, B-21-G-3-X.
Here are the entries received since June: -

Steven Phillips, Harbour View, Burry Port, Dyfed, SA16 0ER. B-15-G-0-M. Tel: 05546-2594 (after 4pm.
Ian Cooper, 172 Pampisford Rd, Sth. Croydon, Surrey, CR2 6DB. B-13-G-0-M. Tel: 01-668-8763 (6pm - 8pm).
Tim Barrow, 9 Parklands, Freeland, Oxfordshire, OX7 2HX. B-17-M-1-L.
Daniel Bedford, 53 Holly Park Rd., London, N11 3EY. B-15-G-3-L.
Mark Browne, 102a Aldershot Rd., Fleet, Aldershot, Hants., GU13 9NY.
Chris Burnett, 18 Kings Rd., London, SW19. P-30-G-0-M. 01-542-4960.
" " " 70 Hargreaves Hse., White City Estate, London, W12. 01-740-8240.
Chris will be at the top address until the 11th of July; at the second address thereafter.
Stephen Cook, Hazelmere, Magham Down, nr. Hailsham, East Sussex. BN27 1PW.
B-15-V/0-2-L.
Paul Harcourt, 139 Pennymead Rd., Harlow, Essex, CM20 3JB. B-14-G-0-2-L.
John Roberts, 19 Delph Road, Merley, Nr Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1RS. B-17-G-2-L.
Tim Purches, 27 Headleigh Rd., Newquay, Cornwall, TR7 2HJ. B-21-0-2-M.
Robert McMahon, 16 Egdon Drive, Merley, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1TY. B-17-G-2-L.
David John Lloyd, Sandy's Holme, Bangor Rd., Benllech, Anglesey, Gwynedd, LL74 8PY. B-16-G-0-L. Tel: Tynygongol 123 (57002487--??)-2496 (after 4pm- before 6pm).
Christopher Murfin, Warren Lane Bungalow, St. Leonards, Beaulieu, Hants., SO4 7XH Tel: 059 063- 201 (6pm-7pm). B-20-M-2-L/M.
Conrad Murkitt, Manor Farm Cottage, Denford, Kettering, Northhampton, NN14 4EG. R-15-V-1-L
Ian Ward, 9 St. Andrew's Ave., Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 6SS. B-16-M-3-M Tel: 0270-56165.
Greg Macdonald, 23 Sutherland Ave., Petts Wood, Kent, BR5 1QX. B-15-V/M-2-L/M. Tel: Orpington (66)-22107.

If any Clubs wish to appear on the list, then the same format is used, but giving average ages etc.
If your name appears on the list above -- Thanks for taking the trouble!

Subscriptions to Dark Star are now available. If you want to subscribe, then make a cheque or postal order out for £1 (for 3 issues). Do not sub for more than 3 issues at a time please. Remember.. Dark Star is monthly, so it gets news to you FIRST!!! Single issues are still available for 20p PLUS an stamped addressed envelope.

Bye for now,

Trevor.

DARK STAR
c/o Trevor Graver
69 Lakeside Road,
London, W14 0DZ.

DARK STAR

THE TRAVELLER MICROZINE

20p

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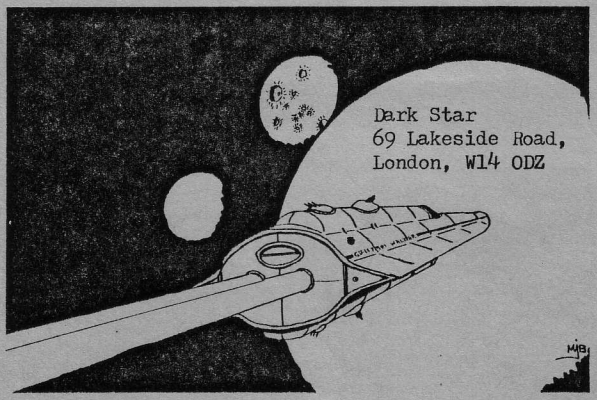

For those who are interested, the spaceship pictured right, is one of the system defence boats (Porcupine class) which were featured last issue.

Drawn by Malcom Beaird.

(In a recent playtest of the Porcupine, it demolished two Gazelle class close escort ships!)

Greetings, and salutations,

Yes, you are now holding a copy of Dark Star -- the only UK newsletter for Traveller fans. The zine which you news of up & coming Traveller products, reviews, and a free contact service.

Are you looking for new Travellers' to join in your adventures? Would you like a pen-pal to exchange ideas for Traveller with? If so turn to page 2 of this zine, where you will find details of the Dark Star Contact Bureau (DSCB).

Did you know that . . .

Page 39 of The Spinward Marches has a typo ? If not, here are the corrections (official):
TL 7 - Circa 1970 to 1979; TL 8 - Circa 1980 to 1989; TL 9 - Circa 1990 to 1999.
.. The LIC which follows various company names, means: LIMITED IMPERIAL CHARTER.
.. That agility should be used as a minus DM for all attacking weapons (correction to High Guard 2nd Edition).
.. That Hault, or Haut, is a prefix for Baronial nobility.
(All of the above, courtesy of Marc Miller, our patron.)

DARK STAR NEWS.....

J. Andrew Keith, and William H. Keith have formed their own company, and are now producing folio adventures for Traveller. Each adventure costs $1.50, and is four sides long (The same size as Dark Star,); maps are given where appropriate.

At present, there are no U.K. importers, so pommie Travellers' will just have to wait.

Marc Miller, the inventor of Traveller will be at Games Day (as mentioned in DS.1), and may hold a seminar on the ideas, and concepts behind the Traveller system.

Bob McWilliams, designer of Traveller adventure 4, LEVIATHAN, will also be at Games Day to run a Traveller adventure.

Trevor Graver, that wonderful zine editor (?), will (sigh.) also be at Games Day, but in all probability will have to work on the Games Workshop stall. I will be working at Dragonmeet (August 8th, chelsea Town Hall, London,) as well; those readers who would like to bother me -- please do so; again, I will be on the GW stand.

Travellers' Journal (JTAS) issue 9, the WAR issue, will arrive in England by mid-late August. Issue 9 contains some very good articles, about 50% of them are connected with the recently started 'Fifth Frontier War, GDW's epic game of space conflict.
There is an excellent article on Vacc suits, and some very authorative stuff of battleships, battleriders, NPC's, and lots more.

Alien Star issue 4, is now out; this Traveller zine now has a professional looking cover (by White Dwarf artist, Alan Hunter,) and contains: Bounty Hunters, the Armoury, 4 adventures, Xboat information, etc. A good effort. Available for 60p from:
Robert McMahon, 16 Egdon Drive, Merley, Wimbourne, Dorset, BH21 ITY.

The 78th Patron -- By Nelson Cunnington. For 2 - 6 Players.

78.Ship Owner. Required Skills: Shipboard Expertise. Required Equipment: None.

Players' Information:

While enjoying a quiet drink at one of the many Spacer hostels on Yres/Regina (0202) the group overhears a conversation between two starhands. Apparently, they used to work for the recently formed, Two Suns Salvage Company, and worked on the salvage barge 'Double or Nothing'. Until, that is, the chief pilot was crippled in a monorail crash; this being the last of 'accidents' to have befallen various crew members. The pair are congratulating themselves on getting out while they are still alive -- even though by leaving they lose the offer of of double pay.

On investigation, the group will find that a number of crew positions are open on the Double or Nothing. Also, that the Two Suns Salvage Co. will almost certainly go bankrupt unless the owner, Vila Chyet, can find a new crew. Digging even further, the group will find that Chyet is willing to pay triple normal crew salaries, and that he will occupy one of the crew positions himself, if need be.

Referees'information:

The area being salvaged is the Two Suns Battle Zone, found midway between Yres and Menorb -- for more details, see Library Data: Battle of Two Suns, 1084 (Pg 38, Kinunir). The referee should design a salvage barge (converted from a standard design,)including such things as: extra fuel tankage, cargo grapples, metalshops, etc.
(A good choice for the above, is the Xboat tender from Traders & Gunboats -- TG,)

Also, an encounter table should be drawn up, detailing possible collisions with floating debris; finding decaying ships; other salvage ships, etc.

Roll 1D6 and check the result with the entries below.

1. All is as represented. The accidents are accidents, and will in all probability cease, (this may result in some, or all of the old crew returning to the DoN).

2-3. Vila Chyet is, in fact, a notorious criminal who is attempting to go 'straight'. In his old career, he crossed paths with an underworld gang-leader, who has declared a vendetta against him. (Probably because Chyet 'Put the finger' on him!)
The assassins sent to kill Chyet do not know what he looks like, but have found out that he either works on, or owns the Double or Nothing (hence the accidents!); so they have placed a bomb in the Jump Drive. The bomb is set to detonate sometime after the ship enters Jump-space, where the ship will have the least chance of survival after an explosion (if the explosion does not kill them).

4-5. Pirates have established a base deep within the Battle zone, away from established routes. If discovered, ie. an encounter is thrown, the pirates will attempt to capture the ship, and if possible, take prisoners for ransom. If prisoners succeed in escaping, the pirates will abandon the base, taking everything of value, and booby-trapping the rest.

6. The Zhodani navy have started covert salvage operations, and are currently trying to salvage an Imperial warship. If discovered, a scout vessel (disguised as an Imperial vessel,) will hail the Double of Nothing, and ask for boarding permission.

If boarding permission is denied, the scout will open fire, and summon help from the other Zho ships.
In all cases, subsequent events should be determined by the referee.

New Equipment: The Vacc Pod. By Nelson Cunnington.

The Vacc Pod (8) Cr 30,000.
As featured in Arthur C. Clarke's "Summertime on Icarus", and "Who's There ?".
A rigid cylinder with waldo extensions for both heavy and delicate work, the Vacc Pod is much favored by Belters, not only for it's long endurance (72 hours,)and maneuver capabilities, but also for it's protection against serious hazards. Included with the Vacc Pod are IR, and UV vision aids; an Inertail Locator, and a mini computer.

An optional extra, is the mining laser (equivalent to a Laser Carbine without sights). The Vacc Pod may be given as mustering out benefits, to those Belters who roll 'Seeker' twice. An Illustration of the Vacc Pod may be found on page 16 of the JTAS issue 3.
Mining Laser. Cr 2500. (Treat the Vacc Pod as Battle Dress). Weight: 1 ton.

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SINGLE ISSUES: 35p without SAE, or 20p with.

DARK STAR REVIEWS

All reviews will have a guide to the quality of the product; the guide is in the form of two marks; the first number representing the general quality of production, and presentation; the second number representing the usefulness of the product, ie. how much material, or background information; library data, etc.

1 = Poor/Little Use; 2 = Average/Useful; 3 = Good/Very Useful; 4 = Very Good/Essential.

Trillion Credit Squadron -- Traveller Adventure 5. Publisher: GDW/GW. £2.50.

Have you ever wanted to to be Grand Admiral of the fleet; be Darth Vader; fight historic (?) naval battles; or use diplomacy in a Traveller game ? If the answer to any of these is yes, then read on; this book is for you.

Adventure 5, The Trillion Credit Squadron (TCS), includes rule for the following: Building and maintaining fleets; design parameters for Billion, and Trillion Cr squadrons; taxes and revenues; statistical combat resolution; additions and clarifications to High Guard (2nd Edition); and would you believe it, more!

Also given in TCS, are two subsectors: The Old Islands; and The New Islands. Background for the two subsectors is given in a short essay, which surprisingly stars the Solomani -- Us!! (And about time too!). A chronology of the Islands Subsectors, shows the dates of any important events, for example: In the year 2050 AD, Earth discovers the Jump Drive.

Hopefully, another book will be released, so that Mercenary is expanded -- just as TCS expands High Guard.

Dark Star Rating: 4/4 (2,if your interest lie more in Character role-playing).

High Passage -- Issue 1. Publisher: High Passage. £3.95.

High Passage is a quaterly magazine devoted entirely to Traveller. Issue 1 contains an interesting selection of articles, for example: A scenario; an ATV expansion; Stardart: a look at a TL14 fighter plane; a new character generation system, and others.

Also, High passage will reveal 1 subsector of the Old Expanses sector, per issue; this issue, containing the Dethenes Subsector. High Passage is Traveller sized, 58 pages long, typeset, and an interesting, but expensive addition to a Traveller library.

The worst point about HP, is that the reader must wait 4 years to complete the Old Expansese sector.

Dark Star Rating: 3/2 -- But with poor artwork, and only 1 advert (?).

The Beyond. Publisher: Paranoia Press. Price @ £2.00.

Another Traveller Star Sector, the Beyond lies one sector rimward-spinward of the Spinward Marches. Designed by Donald Rapp, the Beyond comes complete with a 30 page guide book, and a map of the Beyond. Again, PP have produced a playing aid worthy of the 'Approved for Use With' label, this time by providing the reader with something more than just a map book. All of the subsector maps have been put together, and are printed on the 11" x 17" map. All important capitals, jump routes, confederations, and TAS zones are on the map. Even a Ringworld crops up! This sector is worth adding to any existing campaign, even if only for ideas.

Dark Star Rating: 3/3.

Dark Star: Contact Bureau News

Because of the limited space available to this newsletter, an agreement has been made between Rob McMahon, and John Roberts (Both co-editors of ALIEN STAR,) and myself.

In future all DSCB entries will be printed in Alien Star; although the entries must be sent to me. For those of you who still have no idea what I am talking about - read on.

If you would like to appear on a list of Traveller players, fill in your personal code on a 3x5" file index card (or paper), and send it to Dark Star.

A: Your name & address. B: The type of Traveller player that you are: - R, P, or B (Referee, Player of Both).

C: Your age (to the nearest year). D: The type of Traveller game that you play in: G, V, M, or O (official GDW, Variant GDW, Mixture of available products, or Original campaign design).

E: How long you have been playing Traveller (to the nearest year).

F: What type of contact you would like with other Traveller players; L, M, or X (letters, meetings, or 'Don't contact me; I'll contact you!).

NEW EQUIPMENT: Electrified Knuckle-dusters -- 'Electronux'

Originally designed for a gladiatorial combat game, Electronux are now used by the criminal society of today. Made from one of the many plastic alloys, and insulated to protect the wearer, Electronux release an electric charge when they contact someone.

The charge may be varied, according to taste, by adjusting a control on the thumb end; this may be done at any time during the combat round without penalty. Three settings are available: low; medium; and high. Each inflicting 1D-3; 1D; and 1D+3 respectively. Powered by a short-life powercell, each round of use drains 1, 2, or 3 charges from the battery life, depending on which setting is used (L,M, or H).

Specifications:-

Weight 200gr (negligable). Cost: Cr 500. Powercell Cost: Cr 5 (30 charge cell).
Available at Tech Level 9. Outlawed at Law Level 3 or higher.
Range Modifiers: Close range, +2. Short range, +1.

Armour Modifiers:	N	J	M	C	R	A	B
	+2	-1	+1	-3	+4	-3	-10

Advantageous modifiers: As for hands, but dexterity is used instead of strength.

Electronux may be taken as a mustering out benefit for a THUG; see Criminals in White Dwarf 19.

LIBRARY DATA : KEYWORD ENQUIRY: - MINOR RACE, SUB-CATEGORY 8W/3098: SIMAHNE.

SIMAHNE: Intelligent minor race derived from genetic manipulation of common Omnivore/Gatherer-Hunter stock. The Simahne are a caste based society, governed by a group of elders. Four predominent types of Simahne exist: The Chimani; the Urani; the Gorani; and the Mandralli.

All Simahne believe that they were created by the deity, Kang, and the scholar/priesthood (composed mainly of Urani,) enforce the laws of Kang to such an extent, that even the most educated of the Simahne have deep rooted beliefs. Non-believers are treated respectfully,although with mistrust (NB. there are no Simahne non-believers):

As the Simahne do not know (or wish to know,) of their origins, they do not suffer from the inferiority complex of the Vargr. Simahne can be found spinward of the Spinward Marches, where they span 2 - 3 subsectors.

New Releases: -

Starship Layout Sheets. Games Workshop. £1.99.

A new playing aid for Traveller, each pad contains 50 sheets of grid paper ($\frac{1}{2}$"), and is intended for use with 15mm figures. Using these sheets can aid in the combat situations which frequently crop up in Traveller games.
Dark Star Rating: 2/2.

The Glimmerdrift Reaches. Judges Guild. £3.50.

The second 'official' subsector by Judges Guild, the Glimmerdrift Reaches, maps the area trailing to the Ley Sector. The GdR comes shrink-wrapped, and contains a 32 page guide book, and a 2 colour 22x35" map of the sector.

The guide book contains information necessary for the use of the sector, such as: historical background for the sector, Zarian Realm, Mandanin Co-Dominium, Ginlenchy Concordance, and the Krax Confederation. Also, 16 subsector maps (which do not appear in the Beyond sector book, due the amount of information in it.) are present in the b book, each with a small historical/background passage.
The one failing point in the booklet is the set of encounters for the sector which appear in the back.
Dark Star Rating: 2/3.

Personal Data Files. Games Workshop. £1.99.

Character sheets for Travellers', each pad contains 50 sheets; each sheet contains enough room for service history, characteristics, armour, weapons, equipment, action points, and melee factor (for Azhanti High Lightning).
Dark Star Rating: 2/2.

That's all for this issue, see you next time, if not, I'll see you at Games Day.

Bye for now,

Trevor

Trevor Graver.

When writing out cheques or postal orders, please make them payable to:
T. Graver.

DARK STAR

THE TRAVELLER MICROZINE

20p CHEAP

ISSUE 4/September.

TRAVELLER is GDW's trademark for it's science-fiction role-playing game.
TRAVELLER is used with permission. (C) Trevor Graver 1981.

Hello there! Welcome to this, the fourth issue of Dark Star; the only newsletter for Traveller.

First of all, I would like to say hello to all of the people who met me at Dragonmeet -- Hello. Secondly, Dark Star has a new address. At the moment, I am rather unsure of where I will be staying for the next 6 months or so. So the new address to send in for Dark Star is:

Trevor Graver - Dark Star, c/o Games Workshop Ltd., 27-29 Sunbeam Road, Park Royal, London NW10.

Dark Star is available from the above address for the meagre price of 20p +SSAE for a single issue (alternatively, 35p without SSAE,) or £1 for a 3 issue subsciption.

DARK STAR NEWS

Origins Awards: Traveller Sweeps the board!
This years Awards at Origins saw the following results (deserved).
BEST ROLE-PLAYING MAGAZINE 1980 -- The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society.
BEST ROLE-PLAYING ADVENTURE 1980 -- Twilight's Peak (Adventure 3).
BEST SCIENCE-FICTION GAME 1980 -- Azhanti High Lightning.
GDW extend their thanks to all Traveller players everywhere.
Deluxe Traveller, GDW's attempt to bring Traveller to the masses, comes complete with Books 1-3, (All 10-20% revised -- believe me, they make a difference.) Book 0: An Introduction to Traveller, The Imperial Fringe; an introductory adventure, and a large map of the Spinward Marches (in four colours: blue, green, red and yellow. Plus black and white).

For those people who would like to obtain the map, Book 0, and The Imperial Fringe, GDW are selling these separately. All orders for these items should be addressed to: GDW Parts Dept., PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701, U.S.A. As usual, Games Workshop Ltd. will be printing Dx Tr. later on this year (although imported versions are due in the UK in mid-September).
Book 0 - $5.98; The Imperial Fringe - $5; Map of The Spinward Marches; $4. Add 30% for postage.

In Dark Star issue 2, I announced a ship design competition -- the prize being a map of the Imperium. The winner of the competition: Eric Hunt, of 10 The Avenue, Brockham Surrey RH3 7EN (DSCB code: B-34-G/V/0-2-L). His ship design will appear later this issue.

STRIKER, a set of rules for 15mm battles in Traveller (using Martian Metals figures, or Citadel Miniatures -- the latter appearing to late to have 'Official' acknowledgement in Striker, but 'Official' all the same) is to be released soon. Striker will contain 3 books; Book 1 dealing with battles; Book 2 dealing with equipment; and Book 3 dealing with the design and combat of vehicles.

Interlude:
Bob McWilliams is interested in receiving any other newsletters dealing with Traveller. (It appears that some referees hand out an update sheet to all of their players, thereby keeping the players up to date with current events in the ongoing campaign.)
Anyone willing to send Bob their newsletter, can send it through me.

Also, I hear rumours that certain Dark Star readers have received a little something from other certain people. I didn't get one!

Look for these at Games Day : -

PARANOIA PRESS

MARC MILLER
Second Edition
SCOUTS & ASSASSINS
MERCHANTS & MERCHANDISE
BEYOND
ANDY SLACK
BOB McWILLIAMS
(And ME!)

TRAVELLER: New Weapon - The X-ray Laser, or Xaser (pronounced Zayzer).

By Nelson Cunnington.

Using a similar principle to that of the Laser, the Xaser generates a beam with a higher frequency than that of the laser, therefore giving increased armour penetration.

TL	Base weight	Ammo weight	Rds/p pack	Length	Power Pack cost	Base price
F.5	7000g	4000g	40 shots	1000mm	1500 Cr.	18000 Cr.

Power packs may be recharged from a high energy source for Cr. 300

Range DMs :	C	S	M	L	VL
	-4	+2	+2	+2	+1

Armour DMs:	N	J	M	C	R	A	B.
	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+2

Damage inflicted. 5 Dice.

Azhanti High Lightning specifications:

Weapon/Range	Effective	Long	Extreme	
Xaser Rifle	600 (6)	1200 (3)	---	(Vision Enhanced)

Armour Modifications: Combat Armour, -1; Battle Armour, -2; all others are at +0.

New Weapon Ammunition: Depleted Uranium Rounds (DU). By Nelson Cunnington.

Depleted Uranium rounds are manufactured from non-radioactive Uranium, formed as a byproduct of fuel processing for fission reactors. Because DU rounds mass approximately 1.5 times the mass of an ordinary round, and are highly inflammable, they are employed on Tech Level 8-11 worlds to improve the anti-armour capability of slug-throwers. DU rounds are available for the following weapons:

Rifle, Automatic Rifle, Light Assault Gun (LAG), Advanced Combat Rifle (ACR), and Autocannon. When using rules from Books 1 & 4, DU rounds use the HE Range DMs (with an additional -1 DM at very long range), and the Discarding Sabot Armour DMs (with an additional DM of +1).

If the round is fired at a hard target (such as: Battle Dress, Combat Armour, vehicles, machinery, etc.) in an oxygen bearing atmosphere, an additional DM of +1 is applied to hit, and the wound inflicted will be modified by +1D for a Rifle Autorifle, or ACR; +2D for a LAG or Autocannon.

DU rounds cost 30 times the normal cost of ammunition for each weapon. Normal practice for military organisations, is to use DU rounds as infantry support weapons.

Azhanti High Lightning specifications:

Weapon/Range	Effective	Long	Extreme	
Auto/Rifle -DU	200 (5/8)+3	400 (3/6)+2	550 (2/5)+1	
LAG -DU	200 (7/12)	400 (5/10)	550 (3/8)	
ACR -DU	200 (5/8)+2	400 (3/6)+1	550 (2/5)+0	(Vision Enhanced)
Autocannon -DU	1000 (12/18)+4	2000 (9/15)+3	3000 (5/12)+1	(Vision Enhanced)

Two penetration ratings are given for the DU rounds: the second is for use against hard targets (as mentioned above), the first is for all other cases. When the second number is used, DU rounds are considered to be HE for all purposes.

Dark Star Ship Design Contest Winner: General purpose Armoured Frigate.

FA - 553362 - 900000 - 40204 - 0 MCr 398.005 500 tons.
Batteries Bearing 2 1 1 TL = 15
Batteries 2 1 1

Passengers = 0. Low Berths = 0. Cargo = 30. Fuel = 210 (56 days). EP = 30.
Agility = 3. Troops = 0. Crew = 15. Ship's craft = One 40 ton Pinnace.

KK - 0206911 - 030000 - 30000 - 0 MCr.23.475 40 tons.
1 1 TL = 15.

Passengers = 13. Low Berths = 3 (for 12). Cargo = 2.5. Fuel = 3.6. EP = 3.6.
Agility = 4. Crew = 2. Bridge = 8 tons. Two small craft staterooms.

The Armoured Frigate performs much the same duties as the Zhodani 'Shivva'; ie. diplomatic missions, border patrols, etc. With it's high armour factor, it can withstand the effects of most assaults, and can be found in outer system defence.

It's own armnament consists of two triple beam laser turrets, each grouped into a battery; one single particle accelerator forming it's own battery; and two triple missile turrets organised into one battery.

CONTACT BUREAU

This section of Dark Star is included for those players who have difficulty in finding other Travellers, who would like to fill out their complement of players. If you would like your name to appear of a list of Travellers, read the key below and write your personal code on a 3"x5" file index card (paper will do if you haven't a file index card). The list of Travellers will appear in ALIEN STAR, a fanzine also dedicated to Traveller, so hopefully someone will notice you.

Once you have filled in the card, send it to me (at the address shown on the front page,) along with an order for the next Dark Star (of course!).

Block 1: Your Name and address IN BLOCK CAPITALS.
Block 2: The type of Traveller player you are:
P = Player; R = Referee; B = Both player and referee.
Block 3: Your age to the nearest year.
Block 4: The type of Traveller campaign that you play/run:
G = Official GDW; O = Original; V = Variant GDW; M = Medley of existing products.
Block 5: How long you have been playing Traveller (to the nearest year), ie. 0, if you have been playing for less than 6 months.
Block 6: How you would like to contact other Travellers:
L = Letter contact; M = Meetings, gaming sessions (with prior arrangement!).
Block 7: Your phone number (if desired,) and a time range in which people can phone you, eg. 6-8.30 at night.

It would also be of interest to know how you first heard of Dark Star.
So, use up a bit of your time to send in a contact card -- the effort may be worth it.

By the way, anyone who entered the ship design competition will a) get a free issue of Dark Star, b) have an issue added onto their subscription. That is, everyone except Mr P. Hey, whose address I have lost. (See, if I had you contact card. . .) The winner Eric Hunt, receives a 17"x22" map of the Imperium.

DARK STAR REVIEWS

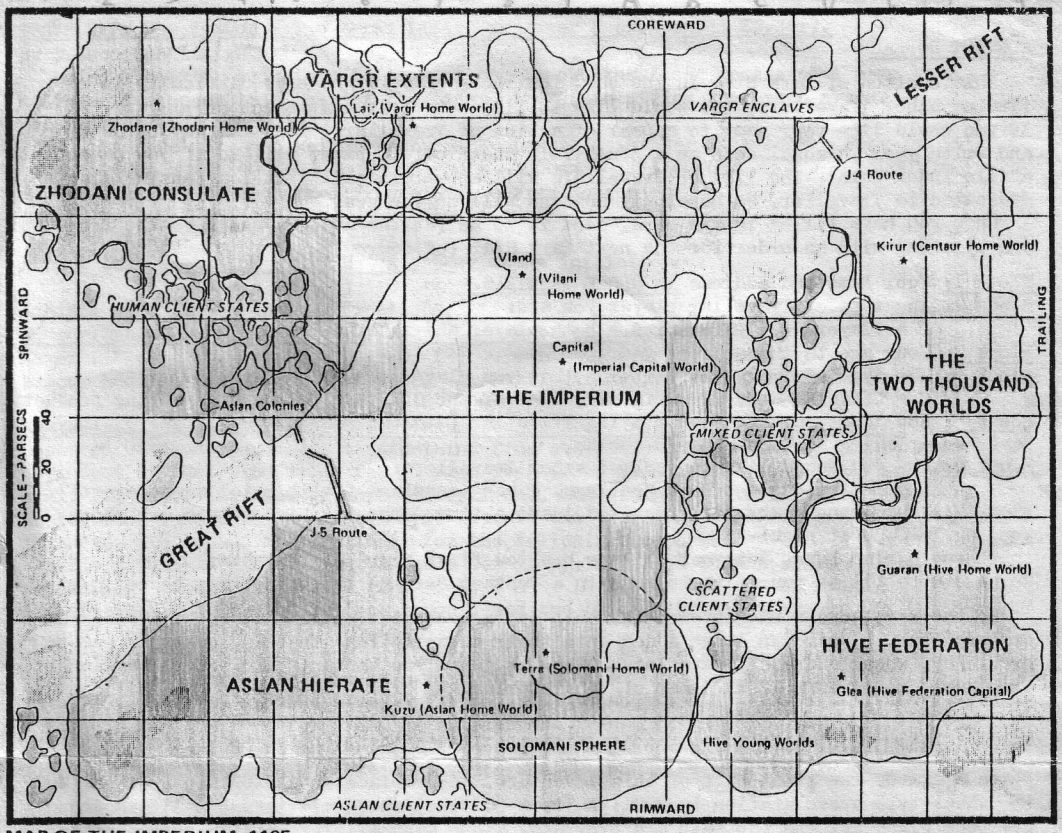
Death Station/The Argon Gambit. Marc Miller/Frank Chadwick. GDW £2.50.
Death Station, the first half of this adventure, takes place on a Lab ship (not unlike the wheel-type space station in 2001: A Space Oddity,) where all is not as it should be. Deck plans for the Lab ship are provided, along with all information pertinent to the death station. Dark Star Mark: 2/3 (Average adventure/Very Useful info.)

The Argon Gambit, the second adventure, takes place on Janosz (in the Harlequin subsector of the Solomani Rim). A departure from the norm of Traveller adventures, the Argon Gambit is a detective story which will keep players guessing. Full information on Janosz is given, along with eight rumour sections, and an essay on the Solomani. Dark Star Mark: 4/4 (Very good adventure/Essential information). Not reccommended for blast and slash parties.

Supplement 9: Fighting Ships. GDW £1.95.
Fighting ships contains a broad overview of the Imperial Navy'. 25+ different ships are examined; each ship is supplied with it's UPP, and any relevant information on the ship, ie. purpose, class name, etc. Each ship is also pictured next to the text about the ship. Ships ranging from 50 to 500,000 tons in size, from Heavy Fighters to Dreadnaughts, yep, they are all in here. It's a pity that a little more care could have been used in the preparation of this booklet (ie. the back cover says "50 to 200,000t", or the fact that none of the ships have frozen watches. Also, most of the ships have little or no armour, which seems a little strange for fighting ships.).
Dark Star Rating: 2/2 (Average/Useful).

The Vanguard Reaches. Paranoia Press. Designer: Chuck Kallenbach II. @ £2
The second Sector published by Paranoia Press, the Vanguard Reaches is located Spinward of The Beyond (reviewed last issue). The VR contains a lot of information for the referee, and introduces two new minor races: The Murian, and the Eslyat.

Full Library data on the sector is provided, along with an 11"x17" map of the sector. As with the Beyond, the map is very useful as it shows all of the subsectors joined together -- although the lack of subsector maps in the book itself can be a pain, especially when the ref doesn't have enough room to spread out the large map.
Dark Star Rating: 3/3 (Good/Very useful)



MAP OF THE IMPERIUM, 1105

GDW

MAPPING THE IMPERIUM (Map (C) GDW, used with permission.)

With the publication of new Traveller sectors becoming commonplace these days, I thought that I should take the time to show you where each sector is located.

All references to location are made in the following way: X,Y -- X being the location of the sector on the vertical axis, and Y being the location on the horizontal axis. (All X locations start from 1, at the top of the map.)

3,5: THE SPINWARD MARCHES, GDW. Home of 90% of all Traveller adventures (the coreward half now lies in a state of war with the Zhodani Consulate -- along with their snidey allies, The Vargr, and the Sword Worlders.).
4,5: THE TROJAN REACHES, Games Workshop, as yet unpublished. Designer:Bob McWilliams.
6,5: THE RIFTSPAN REACHES, Games Workshop, as yet unpublished. Designer: Andy Slack.
4,3: THE VANGUARD REACHES, Paranoia Press, reviewed this issue.
4,4: THE BEYOND, Paranoia Press, reviewed last issue.
4,6: REFT SECTOR, GDW, only part published. Two subsectors are featured in Trillion Credit Squadron.
3,7: CORRIDOR, GDW, as yet unpublished. Insufficient data.
7,7: DARK NEBULA, GDW, half published in the game 'Dark Nebula', also by GDW.
7,9: THE SOLOMANI RIM, GDW, as yet unpublished. The game 'Imperium' features a large section of this sector -- also location of The Argon Gambit, reviewed this issue.
6,10: THE OLD EXPANSES, High Passage, part published. One subsector per issue.
4,11: THE LEY SECTOR, Judges Guild, home of all JG adventures.
5,11: THE GLIMMERDRIFT REACHES, Judges Guild, reviewed last issue.
Group One are not worthy of a mention in Dark Star

33 For Frontiers

That's all for now chaps,
Trevor
See you next issue!

DARK STAR

20p

THE TRAVELLER MICROZINE OCTOBER ISSUE 5

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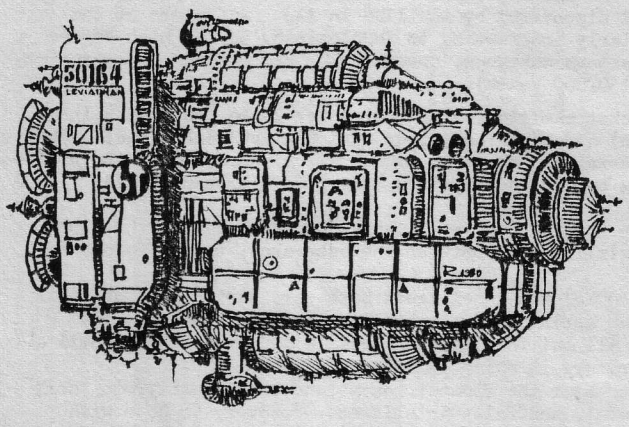
Dark Star (c) Trevor Graver 1981.



Hello again, and welcome to the fifth fabulous issue of Traveller's only newsletter.

Some of you will notice that Dark Star is late this month -- my apologies, but Games Day, no sleep, and a lot of work to do, have all contributed to this sad state of affairs.

The spaceship pictured at left, is the original concept sketch of LEVIATHAN, as seen by the designer, Bob McWilliams, who has graciously allowed me to publish it. Compare it to the elevation drawing on page 38 of adventure 5. Which do you prefer?

And now, a short editorial on the future of Dark Star as we know it. Originally, Dark Star was conceived due to lack of communication in the gaming press, and a need for a newsletter to help Traveller players contact each other (via the Contact Bureau). Dark Star does quite a good job on the news side (at least I think so), but seems to fall down on the contact side. Hardly any entries for the CB have arrived since issue 2. Also, I have received a number of letters, complaining that the instructions for the contact bureau are too long (at least for a zine this size!).

This issue, there are no CB instructions, and an extra page has been inserted. I would like to know the following: a) Is the contact Bureau redundant; b) would you like Dark Star to stay at 5 pages - or is it too hard on the eyes?

If you can spare the time, drop me a line or two, just so that I please most of the readers most of the time -- OK?

Another important thing to remember about Dark Star, is that it has a small print run, and therefore once it is sold out, I am very unlikely to print any more. Issues 1 - 4 are gone forever. So, if you want to make sure of your copy of Dark Star, then you have 3 choices: a) send a 35p cheque/postal order to me, at: 27-29 Sunbeam Rd, Park Royal, London NW10; b) Subscribe for 3 issues at the trivial cost of £1; c) steal a friends copy. In all cases, state the issue/s that you want, and don't forget your name and address (Block Capitals please, I don't carry a Portrans with me).

DARK STAR NEWS: DARK STAR NEWS: DARK STAR NEWS: DARK STAR NEWS: DARK STAR NEWS: DARK STAR

Three new Traveller adventures have been announced by GDW: Adventure 6: Expedition to Zhodane; Adventure 7: Broadsword; and Adventure 8: The Secret of the Ancients.

Bob McWilliams, designer of LEVIATHAN, adventure 5, is working on a new adventure called The Winds of Carse. Whether or not if will be 'Official', or 'Approved for use with', is at present undecided.

Trevor Graver (small time crook, and editor (?) of a newsletter for a game which shall remain nameless) is reported to be working on an 'Approved for use with' booklet for Traveller, dealing with CRIMINALS, and Crime & Punishment. Word out on the street says that the character generation system will be a greatly revised version of the mess that appeared in White Dwarf issue 19.

Andy Slack's RiftSpan Reaches, a Traveller sector soon to be published by GW Ltd. is nearing completion. Also that the coordinates given for the RR last issue, should be 5,5.

LIBRARY DATA: KEYWORD ENQUIRY: MINOR RACE; SUS'KAR: Sub-categories: ALPHA, BETA, GAMMA, DELTA, EPSILON. UNRESTRICTED . By Nelson Cunnington.

Sus'kar: An intelligent minor race, situated on several planets in the Reidain sub-sector, spinward of the Darrian sub-sector.

Originally thought to be ancestors of the Ancients, they are now generally held to be a post-Ancient civilisation which made use of discovered artifacts to plant seed colonies on nearby planets. Unfortunately their early attempts at colonisation and exploration came to little, as the home planet's sun became a red giant before the colonies became fully viable. As a result, the colonies fell to neolithic cultural levels, where they remained until discovered by the IISS in 113. A feature of the Sus'kar which makes them particularly interesting to Xenologists, is the high degree of differentiation between the various subraces, unusual when the period of separation has been so short (an estimated 150,000 years).

Sus'kar have a calciferous basket skeleton, with four lower limbs (used in all but the Delta sub-race for locomotion) and a pair of upper manipulative limbs (again, the one exception being the Delta sub-race). The sense organs are grouped around the brain-case, in the head. Respiration is by the usual paired lung CO2/O2 exchange, via pseudo-haemoglobin.

All Sus'kar show a disposition towards Omnivoral behaviour, although in the Alpha this is seasonal. These are the similarities between the sub-races; the differences are quite striking.

The Sus'kar-Alpha are large (100kg) sub-intelligent Gatherers during most of their planet's year. However, during the spring (after awakening from hibernation,) the Alpha become Killers, destroying all but the smallest animals and each other, until they have established a safe territory in which to raise their families.

The Sus'kar Beta are thought to bear the closest resemblance, externally, to their forebearers. They are tall, graceful, and fully intelligent. However, to cope with their arid environment, they have evolved a great many internal differences. The chief amongst these being their ability to metabolize food into water, and their great sensitivity to magnetic fields, obviously of great use to nomadic gatherers.

The Sus'kar Gamma have become amphibious during their separation from the rest of their race. They too are fully intelligent, and are also the only Sus'kar people with a planet-wide culture. Gamma are able to stay underwater for as much as 25 minutes, and are able to keep up a 15km/h swim all day without tiring.

The Sus'kar Delta are sub-intelligent flying Hunters. An unfeathered wing has eveo evolved, between the fore-limbs and the hindmost pair of legs. The arms are little more than part of the wing now, whilst the foremost pair of legs have developed into crude grasping limbs. The Delta are small, massing only 25kg maximum.

The Sus'kar Epsilon are fully intelligent Hunters, who have adapted to the extremely frigid conditions prevailing on the single continent of their planet. They are densely covered in fur, and have immense reserves of blubber. The Epsilon have an acutely developed aural sense.

The prevailing theory to account for the differences in Sus'kar sub-races at present, is that environmental conditions, different diets, and a low population base to begin with, caused an accelerated evolution process to occur, five separate times. The difficulty with this theory is the low probability that any of the colonies would have survived with the low numbers envisioned by proponents of this theory, let alone five.

All Sus'kar worlds are voluntarily interdicted, except to small scientific expeditions

NEW EQUIPMENT By Nelson Cunnington

Portable Translator: Tech Level C. Base weight 3000g. Cost 20,000 Cr.

The Portable Translator, or Portrans, as it is more commonly called, has two modes of operation: Direct translation; and programmable. In the first, two language chips are plugged into the unit, which then translates verbal conversation between the two languages. In the second, a language chip and a blank chip are plugged in; the user then laboriously utters words from the new language (and their translations,) to the Portrans. The unit is then switched on during a conversation in the new language, so that it may formulate rules of grammar. Such a process takes 2D x 12 hours (DMs: -1 if intelligence of user 10+; -2 if education of user 10+; +1 if intelligence 5-).

The Portrans Cont ...
After this process, the new chip may be used to translate general conversation. During any conversation using a new chip, the referee must roll 9 exactly for a misunderstanding to occur (You may Kill the Bride ...). Due to the nature of language chips, some concepts and words are untranslatable, therefore confusion may arise if the user is unfamiliar with the race involved.

Programmed chips are available for all major races (except the Hivers, who communicate via a complex touch, gesture, and writing).
Programmed chips are available at class A, and B starports of Tech level A+.
Programmed chips cost 900Cr. Blank chips cost 200 Cr.

DARK STAR REVIEWS

All mini-reviews in Dark Star are followed by two marks: the first represents the quality of the product; the second representing the usefulness of the product. Ratings are on a 1 to 4 scale: 1 = Poor/Little Use; 2 = Average/Useful; 3 = Good/Very Useful; 4 = Very Good/Essential.

NAVIGATORS STARCHARTS -- Judges Guild -- £3.50.

Yet another playing aid from JG -- this time a book containing a sector mapping system. Two types of hex grids are provided: the first is for mapping a subsector, and is printed alongside a form for writing planetary data strings; the second on smaller hex paper (smaller hexes dummy!), used for mapping the whole sector, ie 16 subsectors joined together. Enough hex paper for mapping 6 sectors is provided, but I recommend that you use pencils of some sort to map, otherwise a mistake could @@@@ up the whole sector.

The one flaw I can see in NS is the sector hex sheet -- someone at Judges guild doesn't know where to draw lines. Otherwise, one of the most useful play aids JG have yet produced (even though they insist on using their own map key!).
Dark Star Rating: 2/3 -- Average/Very Useful

FIFTY STARBASES -- Judges Guild -- £4.50.

Fifty Starbases is a joke! It contains 15 or so pages of charts supposedly needed to flesh out a Starbase (read: Starport), most of which have been taken from Books 2 & 3 -- wonderful stuff for the referee who loves rolling dice (or plays Space Opera).
The rest of this wonderful 94 page book is padded out with wonderful drawings of Starbases (Ptaugh!), all drawn on the now legendary Campaign Hex System.
(At times, I think JG think that Traveller players are as mindless as the general mass of D&D frothers! 'Look! It says Traveller on the front -- Buy it quick!)
If you have nothing better to do, buy one -- then burn it!
Dark Star Rating: 0/0 @@@@/&&&&

LIBRARY DATA (A-M) Supplement 8 -- Game Designers' Workshop -- £1.95.

The latest Traveller supplements, Library Data fills a lot of the gaps in the ship's library. Material from Adventures is included, but the amount of new material is quite enough to justify the book's existance. Information on all of the major races is present, as are several essays on the Imperium; the Solomani; Megacorporations in the Imperium; and the Emperors' list (which appeared in the mythical JTAS issue 4). Also, the centrespread is a map of the Imperium.

In my opinion, a must for all Traveller referees, and a good buy for Traveller players (this is perfectly safe for players to read/handle, as it contains nothing which would fluff the secrets of your latest Traveller adventure).
Dark Star Rating: 4/4 -- Very Good/Essential.
LET'S HOPE GDW BRING OUT (M-Z) VERY SOON!

MAROONED/MAROONED ALONE Double adventure 4 -- GDW -- £2.50.

The second Double Adventure to take place in the Solomain Rim, Marooned concerns the (mis)adventures of a group of Travellers who find themselves stranded on a very unfriendly world. The adventure itself provides clear instructions for the ref, along with a large geodesic map of the world, nine terrain encounter tables, and weather conditions for each season in each terrain type. Pre-generated characters are provided, but some of them seem unsuitable for this adventure.
Marooned alone is basically the same adventure, but: a) concerns a single adventurer; and b) can be played solitaire.
Dark Star Rating: 3/3 -- Good/Very Useful.

SORAG -- Paranoia Press -- £1.95

SORAG, or Study and Operations Recording Activities Group, is a nice,innocent little organisation dedicated to the study of up and coming cultures etc.
This booklet contains a character generation system (for SORAG members), and discusses the wonderful works that they perform for the Zhodani Consulate.

This book will be too nice for players, and should only be handled by a referee. In other words, due to the nature of SORAG's content, I can't say a thing about it. Don't read it if you are a player -- if only for your own safety!
Dark Star Rating: 3/2 (Good/Useful) -- If only you knew, heh, heh.

DOOM OF THE SINGING STAR -- Judges Guild -- £8.95.

Singing Star, one of the more ambitious Judges Guild projects, details a large interstellar cruise liner. In fact two types of ship are detailed: The first is called a Coreship (displacing a massive 36,117 tons!); the second called a Moduleship, basically a space hotel, carried around by the Coreship to the various ports of call in the Glimmerdrift reaches (Moduleships mass 13,363 tons). With the DOTSS package you get: a 64 page guidebook -- this details the important political powers in the GD Reaches, build details of both the Coreship and Moduleship (of which the SS is one). Also, the book gives crew details (each with a little description of the crewman), and also descriptions of some of passengers aboard. Ten scenarios for use with, and without the SS are provided. Twenty four deck plans for use with the Moduleship, and Coreship, but they are back-printed and may cause hassle should you ever run a chase type scenario.
Dark Star Rating: 3/2 Good/Very Useful

The Self Made Traveller -- Part 2. By Trevor Graver.

For those of you who haven't noticed, White Dwarf issue 25 contains an article by myself, and deals with creating your own Traveller character using a skill point system. Unfortunately, I made a few boobs while typing the article up. This mini article will correct those mistakes, and also offer an Experience system for Travellers.

Corrections & Additions

Basic Travellers: The amount of skill points (sp) received per term should be 20, not 15. Also, if any sp are left over from the previous term, they may be used in the following term. (NB: This applies to Basic Traveller characters only.

Weapon Skills: These include Gun combat, Blade combat, Heavy weapons, and Brawling.

Tactics: This skill is missing from Table 'C'.

Gaining Experience.

During the course of a character's career in the armed forces/merchants/others, he may gain sp to buy skills. Up to now, besides other Experience systems, there has been no way to better himself.

This system uses the same sp system as the original article, but they are earned by using (or at least trying!) the skill in question.
SP may be gained in the following way:
If a character uses a skill in a crisis situation, ie. during a combat situation, or a life or death die roll, he/she may be eligible for sp. After the crisis is over, the character (if still alive,) is awarded 1 Csp (Crisis skill point.) for the skill which was used.
If a character uses a skill as part of a routine, ie. Piloting a ship, Navigating, etc. the character receives 1 Rsp (Routine skill point.) for the skill which was used.
One Rsp may be earned per skill/per week.

At the end of each game month total all Csp for each individual skill, and divide each by three (rounding fraction of less than 1 up to 1, rounding down all others).
Add the Rsp for the appropriate skill to the number found by totaling Csp, and add this number to the score of 2D6. Compare the result with the scores below:

10+: the character gains 1sp towards a new skill level.

12+: the character gains 2sp towards a new skill level.

16+: the character gains 3sp towards a new skill level.

The maximum number of skills that mat be practiced each month may be found by adding INT + ED, and then dividing by four. FIN.

The 79th Patron. By Gary Newcombe.

79. Playboy (Terrorist ?). Required Skills: None. Required Equipment: Weapons, Vehicle. For 3 - 6 Players.

While enjoying a floor show at one of the less expensive nightclubs on Feri, the group is approached by a (seemingly,) well-off man, perhaps in his late 30's. After a few drinks and a lot of conversation, the man feels confident enough to offer the group employment.

As usual, the group can do with some extra cash, so they listen to the mans offer. He informs them that his younger (and less wise,) brother has been mixing with the wrong sort of people, and has consequently been arrested on a murder charge (which he knows his brother did not commit). Due to the severe law enforcement on Feri, he has been unable to bribe his brother out of trouble, and in fact has made his brother appear guilty of the crime. He has only just heard that his brother has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Because of this, he is willing to pay each member of the group 2000Cr to attempt to rescue his brother. Due to an illness contracted during infancy, his brother must have monthly treatment in hospital, otherwise he will die. As it happens, in a weeks time his treatment will be needed. Treatment will take place at the Civic Hospital, just before his brother is shipped to an off-planet prison.

He suggests that this would be an opportune time to spring his brother. The group has a choice as of when to strike: the ambulance taking the patron's brother to the hospital could be hijacked; or the group could kidnap (?) the target while he is in hospital (he will be there for 16 hours).

If the brother is successfully sprung, each member of the group will receive an additional 5000Cr.

Referees' Information:

The referee should provide two maps for the players: one showing the surrounding area of the hospital, and the planned route of the ambulance; the second comprising of the layout of the hospital (or at least the part where the brother will be!).

A meeting place for the group (along with the brother,) and the patron should also be arranged, so that payment can take place. Also, if the ambulance is to be hijacked, the referee should plan a time for the convoy to arrive.

1. Everything is as it seems. The Patron's brother will be taken to hospital in a Grav-Ambulance, along with two policemen on FlyCycles, acting as escourt. A third policeman is inside the ambulance, along with the driver, two nurses, and the brother. The police are armed with auto-pistols, and wear Flak jackets.

2-3. As for 1., but a second passenger is present. He is one of the Ine Givar rebels involved in recent bombings on Feri. He has been sentenced to death, and is on his way to the hospital to be dissected for the planetary Organ Banks.

Due to the nature of the 2nd passenger, the policeman inside the ambulance will be armed with a shotgun, and all occupants of the ambulance (except prisoners,) will be wearing cloth. In addition two police grav-cars will be added to the convoy, each containing three policemen armed with assault rifles. All are wearing cloth armour.

4. As for 1., but the convoy is 30 minutes late. Another (empty,) ambulance will appear 5 minutes after the real one should arrive.

5-6. As for 2., but the patron is one of the Ine Givar rebels trying to free his comrade. Upon delivery of the 'brother', payment will be made. The money will be handed over in an attache case which also contains a concealed bomb, set to detonate in an hour.

In all cases, subsequent events should be determined by the referee.

Well chaps, thats about all -- for this issue anyway!

See you next ish, and don't forget, anyone can contribute to Dark Star.

Send all monies, contributions, abuse, etc. to:

TREVOR GRAVER, C/O GAMES WORKSHOP, 27 - 29 Sunbeam Road, Park Royal, LONDON, NW10

'Bye - Trevor. Trevor

DARK STAR

THE TRAVELLER MICROZINE

20p

MID - NOVEMBER ISSUE

TRAVELLER is GDW's Trademark for it's Science Fiction Role-Playing Game. Traveller is used with permission.

Hello there, and welcome to issue 6 of the only U.K. newsletter for Traveller. Last issue, I asked you if you would like Dark Star to increase in size, from the normal four page, to five pages. Well, due to the massive five responses, I have the following information to impart to you: a) 60% of the people who answered said "Yes, I would like DS to increase in size."; b) 80% of the people who answered said "Where was the extra page?" For those of you who are still interested, the 5th page was hidden on the 3rd page (Two pages had been reduced).

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The next issue of Dark Star, will be the last one. Due to lack of demand, ie. no-one buying DS, and a decrease of available free time to do Dark Star, it's publication will cease. All subscibers with issues remaining, will be remunerated.

And now, the good news.... Alien Star, the bimonthly fanzine which features Traveller, has a regular column which reviews new products, otherwise known as Xboat Information. As of issue 7, I will be taking over as the reviewer of products, so you can expect the same service from your beloved editor, there.

TRAVELLER NEWS+++DARK STAR NEWS+++TRAVELLER NEWS+++DARK STAR NEWS+++TRAVELLER NEWS+++DA

News From The Imperium:

New releases from GDW include: Travellers' Journal no 10 (reviewed later this issue). Invasion:Earth; a Traveller related boardgame, simulating the climax of the Solomani Rim War; and Expedition to Zhodane, Traveller Adventure 6. Expedition to Zhodane, is an adv adventure, in which a group of adventurers have to infiltrate Zhodani territory. "But," I hear you say, "how can you infiltrate somewhere, where the local populace contains Psionics?" Simple, you use a personality overlay device.

Adv. 6 has only just been released in the U.S.A. so U.K. Travellers can expect the U.K. printed version in approximately 4-6 weeks. Journal 10's are in the country now, so get yours before it is sold out.

JUDGES GUILD:

The latest of the JG playing aids: The Amycus Probe, an adventure set in the Gateway Quadrant (yet to be released,) and based around a commando raid on an unkown installation. The adventure will also feature a scoring system for tournament play, and new equipment, including: a 40 ton armoured assault shuttle, and a 1000 ton Border Prowler Class ship.

Secondly, the 3rd sector in the JF range -- The Crucis Margin. This sector links the Ley Sector, The Glimmerdrift Reaches, and the forthcoming Maranatha-Alkahest Sector.

Thirdly, yet another adventure, this time set in the Marantha-Alkahest Sector, and dealing with a sentient race -- the Hawklings. Rats! I've just noticed -- The Gateway Quadrant is JG's name for their area of space.

FASA:

Forthcoming from FASA, the people who brought you those wonderful 15mm ship plans: Action Aboard, (or,Adventures aboard the King Richard,) is a book containing scenarios for use aboard (yes you guessed it,) the King Richard. The main scenario revolves around an Agatha Christie type adventure. Supposedly, buyers do not need to have TKR, as necessary deck plans are included in the book itself.

Also due for release: The Legend of the Sky Raiders, "Set in Amazon jungle surroundings complete with ruins.". Based loosely on "Raiders", but not duplicating the plot.

FASA are also launching a new series of playing aids for Traveller, in the form of large, 11"x17" books, the first two of which are:

Freedonian Aeronautic Space Administartion, Adventure Class Ships: Volume One. FASA,ASC:V1 will contain statistics, deck plans, and descriptions for @ 10-12 ships, Starport Module One: Hotel Complex: Plans, descriptions, and rules for Hotels. All in 15mm scale. (Not you know what FASA means!)

CHAOSIUM

Thieves' World: Based on the anthologies by Robert Asprin, Thieves world is a playing aid for all major role-playing systems, including Traveller. All of the approporiate sections were written by the original game designers -- in this case Marc Miller

NEWS.. Cont..

For this obviously, fantasy-orientated work, Marc has devised a magic system for Traveller, and has also worked out the UPP/Subsector etc.

DARK STAR REVIEWS++DARK STAR REVIEWS++DARK STAR REVIEWS++DARK STAR REVIEWS+++DARK STAR

All mini-reviews in Dark Star are followed by two marks: The first represents the quality of the product on the whole; the second representing the usefulness of the product. Quality/Usefulness.
Ratings are on a scale of 1-4: 1 = Poor/of Little use; 2 = Average/Useful; 3 = Good/ Very Useful; 4 = Very Good/ Essential.

This month, new releases on hand are very few:
JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY No. 10 GDW £1.50. Good Games Stores Everywhere.
JTAS 10, eagerly awaited, due to the fact that it follows the War Journal, contains articles on the following: Planet Building; Troops in the Fifth Frontier War; The Military Academy; Court Martials; and Miniatures for Traveller. Planet Building, is the first in a series of articles (by J.Andrew Keith) detailing with expanding the available information on Traveller Planets, ie. How to make a realistic world out of a number string. Troops in the 5th F.W. is for those people posessing the game, who would like to know how to assign troop ratings to worlds off of the 5FW map (By now, almost everyone must realise that the Imperium stands little chance of holding off the Zhodani- sniff..sniff). The Military Academy offers pre-enlistment education for Mercenaries, and Court Martials, deals with the non-publicised side of military affairs.

All of the regular features are in this issue, ie. The Bestiary; Contact!; Amber zones; The Traveller News Service etc. Also, yes fans this is it! The 77th Patron, which appeared in issue one of Dark Star, appears in JTAS 10.

ORDEAL BY ESHAAR FASA £4.95

The first adventure by FASA, Ordeal by Eshaar is set on the planet Eshaar (surprise!), which is located in the Taemerlyk subsector of the Far Frontiers Sector.
Eshaar is a very nasty planet, ie. corrosive atmosphere, temperatures of around 150 c, along with sulphur/sulphuric acid serving as water etc. Our unwitting band of adventurers decide to take a 'cushy' job, rather than staying in the Spinward Marches, where a war is raging. When they arrive, they find that Eshaar, although over 30 parsecs from the war zone, has a unique mineral which could change the outcome of the war. Unfortunately for the Imperials, the Zhodani are already there. To complicate things further, the Eshaarans (natives to Eshaar, and definitely alien), believe that all native life forms are part of a living being. Therefore, any normal survey operations, ie. drilling, min--ing operations, etc. kill part of the planet. Meanwhile, several groups of Eshaarans are wondering who to grant the rights to 'Affas', the wonder mineral. In the uneasy truce between Zho and Imperials, both are trying to stab each other in the back -- this is where the adventurers come in. The adventuring party must either discredit the Zho or make the Imperials look good, and if necessary, to face the Ordeal by Eshaar.

OBE, is a very good, comprehensive adventure. All necessary information is present, including planetary data; Library Data; pregenerated characters; events; encounters; and much more! (Including diplomacy rules.)
Ordeal by Eshaar is an adventure which should be found in every referees' collection, that is, unless he prefers a 'hack & slay' adventure.

Travellers' Journal 10: Dark Star Mark -- 3/3 (Good/Very useful)
Ordeal by Eshaar: Dark Star Mark -- 4/3 (Very Good/Very Useful)

APOLOGY

As many of you may notice, (Subscribers particularly,) this issue is rather late. Although lack of funds, and news to put in Dark Star are partially to blame, the rest I am afraid is my own fault -- sorry chaps.

In light of Dark Star's imminent folding, please do not subscribe, or resubsribe, as this often leads to embarrassment.

DARK STAR

NEW EQUIPMENT: The Paralysis Rod. By Chris Murfin.

Originally designed as a riot control weapon, the paralysis rod -- or cattle prod, as it is known to the law enforcers of the Imperium -- comes in various shape and sizes. This device generates a field which reacts (violently) with any electrical based nervous system. The general effect of the paralysis rod, is to cause the motor nerves of the unfortunate victim to overload, and 'sieze up'; causing almost immediate unconsciousness.

The standard unit, available at Tech level A, is 500mm long, weighs 400g, and is operated by depressing a recessed button. Other models are available, ranging from the non-standard ring version, to the slaver-type whip. All units are powered by a battery which lasts for 10 minutes of continued use (40 combat rounds).
Due to the specialised effect of the paralysis rod (in whatever version,) contact with bare flesh is necessary.

PARALYSIS ROD

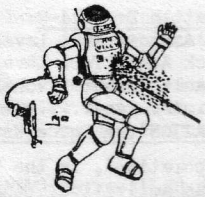
TECH LEVEL	LENGTH	WEIGHT	BASE PRICE	WOUND
A	500mm	400g	2000Cr	2D
B	500mm	500g	2500Cr	2D+3
C+	400mm	400g	5000Cr	3D

PARALYSIS WHIP

TECH LEVEL	LENGTH	WEIGHT	BASE PRICE	WOUND
D+	1700mm	1000g	8000Cr	4D

PARALYSIS RING

TECH LEVEL	LENGTH	WEIGHT	BASE PRICE	WOUND
D+	N/A	N/A	5000Cr	2D



NB: In all cases, the wound inflicted is deducted from the victims Endurance score. Wounds inflicted by paralysis weapons are not lethal, but render the recipient unconscious for 1D6 hours. Unconsciousness only results if the victims endurance score falls to, or below 0.

COMBAT MATRICES:

WEAPON / RANGE:	CLOSE	SHORT	ARMOUR DMs: N	J	M	C	R	A	B
Paralysis rod (all)	+1	+2	+2	+2	-1	-4	+2	-1	N/A
Paralysis Whip	-6	+3	+3	+2	-1	-4	+3	-1	N/A
Paralysis ring	+1	+0	+1	+1	-4	-4	+1	-2	N/A

Prices quoted for the above weapons should be used only when the they are for sale on the open market, ie. low law level worlds, or Slaver institutions.

NEW EQUIPMENT: Battle Dress Expansion. By Chris Murfin.

Battle Dress, the ultimate in individual protection, is an advanced powered version of Combat armour. Battle Dress consists of a slightly larger-than-man-size exoskeleton, equipped with strength enhancing hydraulics. A highly advanced sensor package is also built into it, giving the modern infantryman the firepower and mobility of a present day tank.

Three versions of Battle Dress are available; each performing a distinct role in modern warfare. These are:

BD MkI: 'Scout' Armour.

Combining speed, armour, small strike capability, and the versatility of the IISS, the Scout version is used for reconnaissance/forward observer duties.

Scout armour, incorporates two gravatic field generators, similar to the null-grav modules in the Air Raft, allowing a top speed of 170kph. Standard EVA equipment is also present, allowing up to 100/5G accelerations. Internal life support systems allow up to 30 hours of 'suit time', before a 5 hour recharge is necessary.
Suit armnament for the 'Scout' is as follows: One finger mounted laser pistol on the left arm, and a single 4cm RAM grenade launcher mounted on the back of the suit. Also, a rear mounted magazine can supply up to 6 grenades.

Battle Dress 2 is needed to operate 'Scout' armour.

BD Mk II: Attack Armour.

Attack armour, is the standard infantymans suit, and provides the main strike force for most modern armies. Attack Armour incorporates a single gravatic field generator, allowing a top speed of 150kph. Standard EVA equipment is also present, allowing up to 100/5G accele

BATTLE DRESS EXPANSION...cont...

up to 100/5G accelerations. Internal life support systems allow up to 30 hours of operation, before 8 hours recharge time is necessary.
Suit armnament for the Attack Armour is as follows: One rear mounted 'Y' rack (performing as a dual 4cm RAM grenade launcher), linked to a rear mounted magazine which can supply up to 12 grenades. Normal non-suit armnament is either a PGMP-13, or FGMP 14/15. Battle Dress 2 is needed to operate Attack Armour.

B D MkIII: Assault Armour.
Assault Armour is a heavier version of Attack Armour, and is used only by Elite marine units. In addition to the normal hydraulics systems present in Attack Armour, Assault Armour has power assists which enable the wearer to lift up to 1 metric tonne. The wearers of A.A. may also use the strength of the suit to deliver a devastating punch, counting as a normal fist with double the normal strength DM, and inflicting 6D damage. Battle Dress 3 is needed to operate Assault armour.

Costs for Battle Dress 1-3:
Mk.I. Scout Armour: Tech Level D. Base Price: 30000Cr To military personnel only.
Mk.II. Attack Armr: Tech Level E. Base Price: 40000Cr To military personnel only.
Mk.III. Assault Armour: Tech Level F. Base Price: 50000 " " " ".

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The 'CORPORATION': A Force Within The Imperium. By Chris Murfin.

The 'Corporation', is the Traveller equivalent of the present day Mafia. It's evil, and nefarious activities, range from smuggling, to prostitution, through slavery and armed robberies -- you name it, and the 'Corporation' will have a hand stuck in it somewhere. If anyone, anywhere, at any time, has put a foot wrong, ie. engaged in any form of criminal activity, the 'Corporation' will hear of it. Information thus gained is important to the overall activities of the big 'C', as manipulation of individuals, groups, and even governments, can aid in it's quest for power.

The Influence of the Corporation is such, that even in the outlying areas of the Imperium, it's grip can be felt. The representatives of the Corporation, or 'Keepers', as they are known, can be found on most worlds with a law level of less than 6, and on all worlds with a starport types A-C. Any Corporation bases found on worlds with type D-X will be of a clandestine nature. Due to the size and power of the corporation, the Tech Level of the worlds which they are on, will not always reflect the sophistication of their equipment. Therefore the equipment available to Keepers, will be at one Tech level lower than the highest listed Tech Level for the subsector.

Most criminals are members of the Corporation, and pay a tithe of 10% of their ill-gotten gains, every month -- on collection day. The top 100 galactic enemies are members of the Corporation by choice -- due to the efforts of the Corporation to 'remove' anyone who becomes too powerful 'for their own good'. You either join the big 'C', or have an 'Open Season' declared against you; alternatively, the information which has been gathered over the years by the Corporation, will be handed over to the authorities, who 'Have been watching you for some time'.

Though not enamoured of the Imperium, the Corporation is rarely openly condemned -- except where it's activities clash with those of the Imperium -- and at times, has even aided the Imperial authorites. Trust between the two bodies is, however, impossible. Each would gladly relish the destruction of the other -- if it were to their advantage.

Members of the Corporation, are required to have a skill level of two, in at least two of the following: Bribery; Forgery; Streetwise; or Brawling.

Keepers of the Corporation, are required to have a skill level of three, in at least three of the following: Bribery; Leader; Liason; Admin; Computer; or recruiting.

The Corporation has three major operation centres in the Spinward Marches, these are: Gougeste/Jewell (0109); Penkwhar/Lunion (0508); and Aster/Glisten (0109).

Well, I guess that just about wraps it all up, ie. that's all folks!

I'll see you next issue, which incidentally, will be a massive 6 pages long!

See you next ish,

Trevor

Trevor.